

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the following claims which are pending in the present application:

1. (currently amended) A method for retrieving medical images from various sources and in different formats, to enable the creation of teaching files and research datasets, for the building of a personal medical image library, the method comprising:
 - (a) directly retrieving a plurality of medical images from various sources;
 - (b) storing the plurality of medical images in a database;
 - (c) generating a database record for the teaching files and research datasets;
 - (d) generating the teaching files and research datasets using at least one medical image of the plurality of medical images and additional information input by a user, the teaching files and research datasets being compliant with at least one predetermined schema;
 - (e) saving the teaching files and research datasets into the database; and
 - (f) generating at least one index of the teaching files and research datasets; and
 - (g) automatically anonymizing patient identification data when the at least one medical image is retrieved from the various sources.
2. (currently amended) ~~A method~~ The method as claimed in claim 1, further including a searching mechanism for searching the teaching files and research datasets.

3. (currently amended) ~~A-method~~ The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the medical images are from at least one discipline selected from the group consisting of: radiology, nuclear medicine, dermatology, pathology, ophthalmology, cardiology, neurology, endoscopy, angiography, biomedicine, ECG, EEG, and EMG.
4. (currently amended) ~~A-method~~ The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the method is in accordance with MIRC schema.
5. (currently amended) ~~A-method~~ The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the patient sensitive information is not revealed publicly.
6. (currently amended) ~~A-method~~ The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the patient identification data is able to be revealed to a generator of the teaching files and research datasets.
7. (currently amended) ~~A-method~~ The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the automatic anonymizing of patient identification data includes replacing each item of the patient identification data with an anonymization code.
8. (currently amended) ~~A-method~~ The method as claimed in claim 7, wherein the anonymization code includes a prefix, a randomly generated number and a type.
9. (currently amended) ~~A-method~~ The method as claimed in claim 8, wherein the prefix is a short string of characters representing the

generator of the sensitive information; and the type represents nature of the sensitive information.

10. (currently amended) ~~A method~~ The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein a check is first performed to determine if the item of sensitive information has previously been anonymized and the anonymization code previously generated; and, if yes, retrieving and using the previously generated anonymization code.
11. (currently amended) ~~A method~~ The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the sensitive information includes one or more items selected from the group consisting of: patient's name, patient ID, other patient's names, other patient IDs, patient's birth name, patient's address, patient's telephone numbers, patient's mother's birth name, region of residence, country of residence, military rank, branch of service, patient comments, additional patient history, referring physician's name, referring physician's address, referring physician's telephone numbers, and all other person names.
12. (currently amended) ~~A method~~ The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein, in step (c), ACR codes are entered as a result of system prompts.
13. (currently amended) ~~A method~~ The method as claimed in claim 12, wherein the ACR codes are used for the at least one index of the teaching files.
14. (currently amended) ~~A method~~ The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein indexing is by at least one selected from the group consisting of: title, abstract, keywords, authors, affiliations, contacts, patient

information, radiological codes, image format, image compression status, image modality, anatomic location, and ACR codes.

15. (currently amended) ~~A-method~~ The method as claimed in claim 2, wherein, for internal searching, patient sensitive information is revealed, and for external searching patient sensitive information is anonymized.
16. (currently amended) ~~A-method~~ The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein after each medical image is retrieved in step (a) it can be viewed before being stored.
17. (currently amended) ~~A-method~~ The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein all medical images are kept in their original format once retrieved.
18. (currently amended) ~~A-method~~ The method as claimed in claim 17, wherein the formats include at least one selected from the group consisting of: AVW, HDR/IMG (Analyze format: version 8.0 and 7.5), BMP (Windows Bitmap format), DICOM (Digital Imaging and Communications in Medicine), GIF, JPEG, JPEG 2000, PNG, PNM, PPG, RGB, RGBA, SGI, TIFF, AVW, HDR/IMG (Analyze format: version 8.0 and 7.5), Animated GIF, MIRA, Multi-sliced TIFF, MOV, AVI, MP3, RM, and Waveform for ECG, EEG, EMG.
19. (currently amended) ~~A-method~~ The method as claimed in claim 18, wherein for two-dimensional medical images, two additional JPEG images are generated for ease of browsing using a web browser; and for other image formats, an additional thumbnail image ~~may be~~ is generated.

20. (currently amended) ~~A method~~ The method as claimed in claim 19, wherein the two additional JPEG images are of the same size as thumbnail images.
21. (currently amended) ~~Apparatus~~ An apparatus for retrieving medical images from various sources and in various formats for creating at least one teaching file and research dataset; the apparatus ~~including~~ comprising:
a database for storing the at least one teaching file and research dataset in a generated database record,
an image retrieval interface ~~able to~~ configured to directly retrieve medical images from various sources and in different formats,
an MIRC server configured to provide an MIRC file storage service for the database and for a user's machine automatically anonymizing patient identification data based upon the at least one medical image retrieved from the various sources, a server, and
a graphic user interface for operation on the user's machine to communicate with the MIRC server; and
a web server to service requests from the graphic user interface.
22. (currently amended) ~~Apparatus~~ The apparatus as claimed in claim 21, wherein the database is a relational database for storage of all required information, including: database tables; database indexes; database scripts; and pointers to the medical images, teaching files and research datasets.
23. (currently amended) ~~Apparatus~~ The apparatus as claimed in claim 21, wherein the server serves requests received from a user via the graphic

user interface on a user's machine; the graphic user interface being for providing access functions and file editing functions.

24. (currently amended) ~~Apparatus~~ The apparatus as claimed in claim 21, wherein the server includes at least one selected from the group consisting of: a two dimensional image loader, a three dimensional image loader, a multi-media loader and a telemetry loader.
25. (currently amended) ~~Apparatus~~ The apparatus as claimed in claim 24, wherein the two-dimensional image loader is for retrieving two-dimensional still images.
26. (currently amended) ~~Apparatus~~ The apparatus as claimed in claim 24, wherein the three-dimensional image loader is for retrieving three-dimensional still images.
27. (currently amended) ~~Apparatus~~ The apparatus as claimed in claim 24, wherein the multi-media loader is for retrieving multi-media files.
28. (currently amended) ~~Apparatus~~ The apparatus as claimed in claim 24, wherein the telemetry loader is for retrieving telemetry data.
29. (currently amended) ~~Apparatus~~ The apparatus as claimed in claim 21, wherein the graphic user interface includes a PMIL client as a user interface able to run in a web browser or as a stand alone application on a user's machine, and provides MRIC editing functions.

30. (currently amended) ~~Apparatus~~ The apparatus as claimed in claim 21, wherein the server includes an MIRC storage for providing an MIRC file storage service for the database and for the user's machine.
31. (currently amended) ~~Apparatus~~ The apparatus as claimed in claim 30, wherein the MIRC server further includes an MIRC query to provide queries as defined by the MIRC scheme.
32. (currently amended) ~~Apparatus~~ The apparatus as claimed in claim 21, wherein the at least one teaching file is in accordance with a Medical Imaging Resource Centre standard.
33. (currently amended) ~~Apparatus~~ The apparatus as claimed in claim 21, wherein the formats include at least one selected from the group consisting of: AVW, HDR/IMG (Analyze format: version 8.0 and 7.5), BMP (Windows Bitmap format), DICOM (Digital Imaging and Communications in Medicine), GIF, JPEG, JPEG 2000, PNG, PNM, PPG, RGB, RGBA, SGI, TIFF, AVW, HDR/IMG (Analyze format: version 8.0 and 7.5), Animated GIF, MIRA, Multi-sliced TIFF, MOV, AVI, MP3, RM, and Waveform for ECG, EEG, EMG.
34. (currently amended) ~~Apparatus~~ The apparatus as claimed in claim 21, wherein all medical images are kept in their original format once retrieved.
35. (currently amended) ~~A method~~ The apparatus as claimed in claim 33, wherein for two-dimensional medical images, two additional JPEG images are generated for ease of browsing using a web browser; and for other image formats, an additional thumbnail image ~~may be~~ is generated.

36. (currently amended) ~~A method~~ The apparatus as claimed in claim 35, wherein the two additional JPEG images are of the same size as thumbnail images.
37. (currently amended) ~~Computer~~ A computer useable medium comprising a computer program code that, when executed, is configured to ~~cause control a computer processor to execute one or more functions to perform the method of claim 1~~ retrieve medical images from various sources and in different formats, to enable the creation of teaching files and research datasets, for the building of a personal medical image library, by:
directly retrieving a plurality of medical images from various sources;
storing the plurality of medical images in a database; generating a database record for the teaching files and research datasets;
generating the teaching files and research datasets using at least one medical image of the plurality of medical images and additional information input by a user, the teaching files and research datasets being compliant with at least one predetermined schema;
saving the teaching files and research datasets into the database;
generating at least one index of the teaching files and research datasets;
and
automatically anonymizing patient identification data when the at least one medical image is retrieved from the various sources.